

# **Clark County 78<sup>th</sup> Street/WSU Property Concept Planning Sounding Board Meeting #6**

**May 6, 2009**

## **Summary Notes**

### **Sounding Board members in attendance:**

Rob Freed, Clark County Historic Preservation Commission; Blair Wolfley, WSU Extension; Doug Ballou, NACCC; Bruce Prengruber, Clark County Food System Council; Jim Youde, Clark County Food Bank; Doug Stienbarger, WSU Clark County Extension; Florence Wager, Parks and Recreation Commission; Pete Dubois, Clark County Sustainability; Ila Stanek, Hazel Dell/Salmon Creek Business Association/West Hazel Dell Neighborhood Association; Bud Van Cleve, NE Hazel Dell Neighborhood Association; and Sunrise O'Mahoney, Vancouver Food Cooperative

### **Consultant staff present:**

Adrienne DeDona and Sylvia Ciborowski, JLA

### **Clark County staff present:**

Mark McCauley, General Services Director; Jim Gladson, Public Works; Colete Anderson, Community Planning; and Jose Alvarez, Clark County.

### **Members of the public present:**

Glenna R. Bowman; Roy Garrison; Thomas Gibson; Glen Grossman; Jeff Duval; Beverly Doty, Permaculturist; Stephen F. Johnson, American Clean Coal Fuels; Marcia Thomas, Teacher, Garden Education, Metro Portland; Rory Bowman; and Brenda K. Millar Stanton

## **Introductions and meeting agenda overview**

Adrienne DeDona kicked off the meeting with an overview of the agenda and a quick round of introductions.

## **Debrief public workshop and report back from small group discussions**

### **Small Group Discussion Debriefing**

Adrienne asked Sounding Board members to reflect on the small group discussions they facilitated during the April 9 Public Workshop, and consider what stood out, what concerns were raised, and what overall message they heard from the public. Each member briefly presented the following:

#### *Florence Wager and Robert Freed*

Florence and Robert were struck by how much all members of their small group were in concert, with similar interests in the project's educational purposes and using the land wisely. They had amazing enthusiasm for the property and all things agriculture, with a real interest and knowledge of the site and

possible uses. Many people were also interested in restoration of existing buildings. None were very informed about Kapus Farm, however. There was some concern about over-paving the property.

*Bud Van Cleve*

Bud was impressed by the enthusiasm of the people in his group, who overall had a good discussion. Participants were most interested in the trails and education process, including agricultural, wetlands, and food education. There were some negative comments about food bank being located on the property.

*Jose Alvarez and Nancy Funk*

Jose reported that they heard that educational and agricultural uses were most favored by small group participants. There was some concern about the restaurant and being able to support it financially. Participants did not want the restaurant to be corporate/commercial in nature.

*Colette Anderson*

Colette noted that participants seemed energized by the event, and even those that had just come to listen ended up participating. There was a high energy, and feelings of accomplishments.

*Sunrise O'Mahoney*

Sunrise noticed that most people were interested in small agriculture projects, and expressed concern over large-scale commercial leasing of land; they were, however, more supportive of small-scale non-commercial leasing. The group was enthusiastic about educational and community aspects of the property. One participant was greatly in favor of linking Hazel Dell Park to this site. There were concerns over how the project would be funded. Overall, people had good dialogue, and had a lot of similarities.

*Blair Wolfley*

Blair was generally impressed by the group's enthusiasm over the educational connection in all uses. Several Hazel Dell residents were very interested in having livestock and chickens on the property. The most common concern was over how to combine the desire for public access with providing security for the facilities. Participants want open walking trails on site, but also want to protect educational facilities and community gardens. They were very supportive of the project's theme of creating a connection with the land, and with sustainability principles.

*Jim Youde and Mark McCauley*

Jim and Mark noted that, in general, participants showed lots of support for the concept of sustainable agriculture as a whole. Some people had an interest in the demonstration/ educational kitchen. There were also concerns about security, and about a restaurant on site. They would not like to see a commercial restaurant, but rather an institution involved in teaching, such as culinary institute that would charge a minimal fee. Participants also expressed that commercial activities should be tied directly to the concept of food and local support.

*Bruce Prengruber and Jim Gladson*

Bruce and Jim facilitated the group of elderly residents that live in the mobile home park to the West of the site. Initially, they were very hesitant, and wanted to know what the perimeter fence would be like. They were, however, generally supportive of the range of uses presented. They showed concern about commercial leasing of land, as this implies a private benefit to a public good. One participant was very interested in the opportunity to provide adult volunteer assistance. The also asked about drainage on

the site; there are some drainage issues going into mobile home park currently because a ditch backs up and floods water into people's property.

#### *Doug Steinbarger*

Doug noted that participants showed broad agreement, and were very interested in educational uses. They were concerned about commercial leasing taking up too much land. Aesthetically, some wanted the site to continue as an open space.

#### *Pete Dubois and Doug Ballou*

Pete and Doug agreed that participants showed general support for most of the farming and educational agricultural uses. Several wanted to keep the research and scientific uses, because agricultural research has been scaled back recently in Clark County. People think the site has been underutilized in the past years, and would encourage more research use. There was also good support for the food bank. One person had concerns about traffic.

#### *Ila Stanek and Mark Stephan*

Ila reported that her and Mark heard that many participants were interested in the site offering easy public access to community gardens and other facilities. Many see the property as an underutilized public resource. Security was also a concern. Some participants would like to volunteer, and teach kids to really farm properly. Some thought the restaurant idea might work, but stressed that commercial and business activity should be local, not corporate.

#### *Public Comment*

There was a public comment from Beverly Doty, a permaculturist. She would like to see the following elements on the property: an Alice Waters style restaurant, bike repair shop, intergenerational programs for youth and elderly, modular inexpensive high-rise buildings, underground or perimeter parking, participation of the Grange and Native Americans, and habitats for beneficial insects needed as pollinators. Her hopes for the property are that it will be a sustainable community using permaculture principles.

### **Public Workshop Summary Review**

Adrienne reminded members that she had emailed them the April 9 Public Workshop Summary, and asked if anything was missing. Sounding Board members responded:

- Bruce noted that mobile park residents' issues were not adequately reflected in the report.
- Robert noted that the summary indicates that historic preservation received a lot of dots, but in the summary of comments, it received only a "fair amount" of support, which doesn't seem to match up.
- Bud added that mobile park residents expressed that they would like to have a gate from their property to the 78<sup>th</sup> property, to have direct access to the walking trails.
- Sunrise asked if the TAC report is now reflected in the preferences. Adrienne replied that it is, but only in the appendix.

### **Review preference survey results**

Adrienne passed around a preliminary draft of the Online Survey Summary, current as of Monday, May 4. She reflected on the summary, noting that public feedback gained through the survey seems to mirror feedback previously heard through the April 9 workshop and other sources. Overall, the ratings graph

shows that people are supportive of most of the ideas being considered; there is no potential use that people are adamantly opposed to. Adrienne repeated that this was not a scientific survey, but a means to gauge the pulse of the community.

## **Update on interim uses and other project related information**

### **TAC Report**

Mark addressed concerns over how the TAC report has been handled. He explained that the report was posted on the website and then removed because the County was concerned that, if a specific design document was published, people would think that the plan had already been made with no public input. For the same reason, Ila Stanek's rendering of some commercial aspects and LSW Architect designs were not posted on the website. The County decided to remove all design documents from the website and not bring them to the workshop. Denston Dennison did bring the TAC report to the workshop, but it was not considered as a use of the property, and therefore treated differently from the other proposed uses discussed at the workshop. Clark County believes the TAC report is a quality document, and it will be considered during the design phase of the project along with other design documents and ideas.

Pete Dubois then discussed how the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) came to be. The TAC was created to explore permaculture uses, and was composed of 20 people, including Pete, Doug S. and Blair W. There were 8 one-day sessions with guest expert presenters, and over a 2-day period, a process of designing what the site might look like if it included permaculture principles. The intent of the TAC was to inform the group about new farming techniques and new possibilities, and bring this information back to the sounding board and the management team to take into account in their input and decision making. Blair Wolfley added that the TAC report was not something created by a group of highly specialized permaculturists, and not really a "technical" committee; most members did not know much about permaculture at all. He agreed that it is a valuable document that should advise the group, but that the site will likely never be 100% permaculture.

Adrienne noted that it is important to remember that the door has not been closed on the report. It will still be considered, along with other ideas of the community. The concept plan will incorporate a broad range of input.

Bud VanCleve asked who on the TAC represented the community at-large, and noted that no one from the Hazel Dell Neighborhood Association was on it. Mark responded that the TAC was not appointed; it was just composed of people interested in permaculture concepts. Pete added that the intent of the TAC was not to represent proportionally all people, but just to bring new information into the process. It parallels a permaculture design course, open to any interested people. He stressed that the County did not intend to create anything that would become a recommendation or potential use, but just wanted to educate people in permaculture principles.

Adrienne went on to explain that the flipchart page presented by Deston on the TAC at the April 9 Workshop was lost, and for this reason it was unintentionally omitted from the first draft of the summary report that was distributed. Sunrise noticed that the TAC information was missing from the report. Mark and Adrienne both remembered seeing the TAC flipchart page with a handful of dots on it, but Pete sent in a photo with many more dots on it. This updated information is now included in the preferences appendix. Adrienne explained that the dot exercise was not a "voting" exercise; it was just an effort to gauge public opinion. Some people did not use dots at all, and others used lots of dots; so it

is really not scientific. Pete added that, likely, people who placed dots on the TAC page likely were voicing their support for permaculture principles in general, not for the specific TAC report.

Sunrise asked if “permaculture principles” would be added to the public workshop summary report since it received so many dots. Pete responded that “permaculture principles” is not a specific use, but a concept and vision. Thus it cannot really be compared to the other potential uses in the chart.

Mark added that the public workshop summary could include a paragraph on the TAC report and permaculture and how this was viewed at the meeting, but that it should not be included on the chart of proposed uses. Blair suggested that the paragraph include that some people thought they were voting about the TAC report, some about permaculture principles, but that overall, the 60 dots represent peoples’ interest in permaculture principles.

Florence expressed concern about putting too much importance on the dots exercise. Many of the uses weren’t adequately represented by the dots, such as the viewpoint shelter, and four people in her small group did not even use dots. Mark agreed that the dots exercise is not the only feedback the County will consider; there were many tools used by people to give their preferences, including the dots exercise, small group meetings, survey, comment forms, etc.

Ila added that workshop participants were likely overwhelmed by all of the potential uses, and that once these are pared down, the public will be able to comment again, and may find it easier to weigh in on a fewer number of ideas.

The group agreed that the Workshop Summary Report should include a paragraph on TAC/permaculture principles. Mark will float a draft amongst the Sounding Board and take comments.

Robert asked if the Sounding Board will be involved in siting the different uses and components on the property. Adrienne answered that the master planning process will work on siting, and that this will be a separate effort. The task of the Sounding Board is to consider ideas for uses of the property, and whittle those down using public comments in order to help the County in the master planning process. Mark added that the Board of County Commissioners will have to approve the concept before the master planning process is underway.

### **Kapus Farm**

Mark discussed preservation of Kapus Farm, which includes a carriage house, outhouse, and water tower. The County cannot afford to preserve this, nor relocate the buildings. The buildings are a liability now, and will need to be torn down as early as this summer. A member of the public asked if Kapus Farm could be moved to the fairgrounds, and Mark replied that even this would cost too much and it is not in the Fairgrounds Master Plan. Relocation would cost a couple hundred thousand dollars, plus the cost of meeting current codes, retrofitting the buildings, and adding ADA accessibility.

### **Community Gardens**

Mark explained that the County has decided to move ahead with the interim use of community gardens, with Sunrise helping as a temporary employee. The County is currently conducting a lottery process for people interested in community gardens leases, which cost \$25 each. Commissioner Bolt is very invested in the community involvement piece of this, and may open more plots than the 30 being offered now. One potential problem is the lack of parking at the 78<sup>th</sup> Street site.

Sunrise added that mobile home park residents have been notified, and three have already signed up for the lottery. Sunrise encouraged members to inform others about the project, and noted that the 78<sup>th</sup> Street community gardens would be organic-only, which is unique to the site. Naturally Beautiful Backyards will do a quick workshop on what organic means. She explained that garden leases will be good for one growing season (through Oct 25), and added that this is a trial process which will be evaluated to make improvements for subsequent years.

A member of the public asked if this information has been given to the neighborhood associations. Jim Gladson responded that it was sent out as a press release, and should have been distributed by Clark County to the usual sources.

### **Other Interim Uses**

Mark explained that, as another interim use, the County is considering making an on-site meeting room available. The County is also talking about opening access to the interior fence line which is walkable, but there are security issues. The building and ridgeline now are not ADA accessible. Building a ramp would be expensive. The County is taking up the possibility of purchasing a double-wide accessible trailer.

Blair W. announced that the Master Gardeners are having a plant sale over the weekend, and that there is a plan researcher planting a couple hundred different tomato plants. This summer, they may conduct some public workshops regarding potatoes and tomatoes.

### **Next Steps**

Adrienne discussed the next steps for the concept planning process, which include:

- *Management Team meeting (Friday, May 8):* debrief about April 9 Workshop and online survey, and determine appropriate course of action and next best steps
- *Develop draft alternatives/concepts:* using feedback from the various public input tools, the County will pull together consistent themes to create a draft concept plan/alternatives for proposed uses
- *Management Team meeting:* discuss and revise draft concept plan/alternatives for proposed uses
- *Sounding Board Meeting # 7:* discuss and provide input on draft concept plan/alternatives for proposed uses. Input will be incorporated into the draft alternatives as necessary
- *Open House:* public comment will be collected on draft concept plan/alternatives for proposed uses
- *Management Team meeting:* reflect on public comment to draft alternatives
- *Sounding Board Meeting # 8:* final meeting of the sounding board to discuss and revise draft alternatives
- *Management Team meeting:* final meeting to make recommendations and forward to Board of County Commissioners

Doug Ballou wanted clarification on who would be developing the draft alternatives and concepts. Mark responded that he would do that in conjunction with a designer. The designer will conceptualize potential uses, but will not do siting. Doug asked that a narrative be created to explain and describe each concept.

## **Expectations for the Concept Plans**

Adrienne asked Sounding Board members to discuss their expectations for the Concept Plans that would be created. Some members replied that they would like to see narrative descriptions of each use, and an explanation of how the concept plan achieves the purpose statement and guiding principles.

*Flip chart notes for expectations for the concept plans:*

- Themes – described in narrative for each proposed use
- How each use meets the guiding principle
- Map of wetlands, buildings, and other permanent elements
- Master Plan – phase for design/siting. Refer to TAC and other data
- Master Plan – use an advisory group, not just an architect
- Ongoing management of agriculture is critical
- Assign elements that could change over time
- Describe emphasis of each concept plan (i.e. education, demonstration farm)
- Function/element outputs exercise from permaculture class
- Draw sketches of elements to demonstrate them (rather than fixing them on a map)
- Use input from a team of architects and permaculturists to design the Master Plan
- LSW Architects be more involved at the end of process, not at beginning
- Think about the big picture and remain flexible

### *Group Discussion*

Mark asked for clarification over whether the group wanted just a narrative description with no graphics. Doug Ballou replied that some permanent facilities such as the wetlands and existing buildings could go on a map. The group agreed that what is on the map should be similar to the handout given out at the workshop. Blair added that whenever something is placed on a map, it can be problematic. He would like narrative descriptions that the designers and surveyors could then use for siting during the master planning phase, along with the permaculture principles and ideas from the TAC report.

Mark replied that perhaps it would be best to have a team with permaculturalists, agricultural specialists, farmers, etc. having an ongoing conversation about where to site different elements. It is unlikely that a designer would create one document that would remain unchanged in the future. The ongoing management of the agricultural piece is vital.

Doug S. agreed with Doug B.'s idea of assigning different general areas on the property, but not making these hard-fixed on the map. Doug B. suggested that the team develop a number of scenarios with different focuses or themes that emphasize certain elements.

Adrienne concluded this discussion and told members we would review a draft concept plan developed through their input at the next meeting.

## **Public Comment**

*Steven Johnson, Co-Founder of alternative energy company*

I support including more permaculture/ biodynamic design principles. This really has the potential to be tremendous asset for the County. My interest on the energy side is that we are running low on oil and

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other resources. The future of agriculture has a lot to learn potentially from this project. I also second the idea to let farmers be in charge of agriculture decisions in the future.

*Jamie Clark: Landscape Architect*

I have been involved in the permaculture TAC class. It would be useful to do some function and element mapping, where for each element you look at inputs and outputs, and synergistic and conflicting relationships between elements. This helps sort which elements should go together, and which should be separated. One thing that would help the writing of the narrative aspect would be to draw pictures and sketches or prospective sections of different elements, instead of putting it on a map, which could cause conflict. Pictures and sketches can help people visualize some of the elements without placing it on a specific area. A good team of engineers, landscape architects and permaculturists will be necessary for the implementation of all this.

*Jeff Duval, Horticulture Student*

There is an inability to farm in this County. Is the wetland historical? I am in favor of using no pesticides, but has anyone done a study on weed seed banks? This project represents a new forefront, but how much fluff will this project have? I really support the food bank idea; we need to get food into people's mouths. Can we put a green roof on the food bank?

(Mark responded that the wetlands have not been delineated.)

*Beverly Doty, Permaculturist*

There will be a Spring Corridor Tour on May 23.

*Ania Larson*

I was at public workshop. People from surrounding area have had a very low quality of living, and it is urgent that they obtain more access soon to this site. It is great that the community gardens are happening now. Maybe tours should be allowed to cemetery.

*Anonymous*

I would like to see a plan on the webpage that shows the permanent structures such as wetlands, buildings, etc. (The group responded that this is available on the webpage now.)

*Brenda Miller Stanton*

I suggest that LSW Architects be more involved more towards the end, not at the beginning when they might do a lot of work that is later just changed. Maps that come out of this process should encompass all guiding principles before making final maps. Even if it comes down to percentages, such as having a percentage of land for food bank, a percentage for community access, etc. This would help so that, if in the future a corporation were to come in, they would not be able to take land away from these uses.

*Roy Garrison, North Fairgrounds Committee*

I was interested in the Kapus Farm situation, because I live near it. I really applaud you for putting your time in. I support this and hope you keep the big picture in mind all the time, and don't let your personal preferences override the big picture. Regulations are cumbersome as you get into historical preservation, and you will face that as you get into that.



*Tom Gibson*

I think that permaculture is not just about permanent agriculture, but about an integrated holistic approach to designing anything. I am astonished to be seeing a serious discussion about permaculture now. I look forward to seeing how permaculture is put into this site. This is going to be an experiment.

*Glen Grossman*

Do you see Tom's work taking off for WSU research?

(Blair responded that this is a good possibility. Tom is captivating and very informed. We need someone to work with him in data collection and analysis.)

Thank you to the committee and the County for the opportunity to participate in this process.